

Inheritors:
A Play In Three Acts
(1921)



Susan Glaspell

INHERITORS

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY

SUSAN GLASPELL



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INHERITORS

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS


BY
SUSAN GLASPELL

First Performed by the Provincetown Players
New York City, March 21, 1921

ORIGINAL CAST

Smith	A. K. MILLER
Grandmother, <i>Silas Morton's Mother</i>	BLANCHE HAYS
Felix Fejevary, 1st	ARNOLD SCHWARZ
Silas Morton	GEORGE CRAM COOK
Felix, <i>Son of Felix Fejevary, 1st</i>	WILLIAM RAINEY
Senator Lewis, <i>A State Senator</i>	ALAN McATEER
Horace, <i>Son of Felix Fejevary, 2nd</i>	ANDREW FRASER
Doris } <i>College Girls</i>	{ JEANNIE BEGG
Fussie }	{ EMILY TAFT
Madeline Fejevary Morton	ANN HARDING
Aunt Isabel, <i>Wife of Felix Fejevary, 2nd</i>	ELIZABETH BROWN
Harry, <i>A Student Clerk</i>	DONN MILLER
Professor Holden	JAMES LIGHT
Ira Morton, <i>Son of Silas Morton</i>	JASPER DEETER
Emil Johnson	HAROLD MCGEE

INHERITORS



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INHERITORS

ACT ONE

SCENE: *Sitting-room of the Morton's farmhouse in the middle west—on the rolling prairie just back from the Mississippi. A room that has been long and comfortably lived in, and showing that first-hand contact with materials which was pioneer life. The hospitable table was made on the place—well and strongly made; there are braided rugs, and the wooden chairs have patchwork cushions. There is a corner closet—left rear. A picture of Abraham Lincoln. On the floor a home-made toy boat. At rise of curtain there are on the stage an old woman and a young man. GRANDMOTHER MORTON is in her rocking-chair near the open door, facing left. On both sides of door are windows, looking out on a generous land. She has a sewing basket and is patching a boy's pants. She is very old. Her hands tremble. Her spirit remembers the days of her strength.*

SMITH *has just come in and, hat in hand, is standing by the table. This was lived in the year 1879, afternoon of Fourth of July.*

SMITH

But the celebration was over two hours ago.

GRANDMOTHER

Oh, celebration, that's just the beginning of it. Might as well set down. When them boys that fought together all get in one square—they have to swap stories all over again. That's the worst of a war—you have to

go on hearing about it so long. Here it is—1879—and we haven't taken Gettysburg yet. Well, it was the same way with the war of 1832.

SMITH

[*Who is now seated at the table.*] The war of 1832?

GRANDMOTHER

News to you that we had a war with the Indians?

SMITH

That's right—the Blackhawk war. I've heard of it.

GRANDMOTHER

Heard of it!

SMITH

Were your men in that war?

GRANDMOTHER

I was in that war. I threw an Indian in the cellar and stood on the door. I was heavier then.

SMITH

Those were stirring times.

GRANDMOTHER

More stirring than you'll ever see. This war—Lincoln's war—it's all a cut and dried business now. We used to fight with anything we could lay hands on—dish water—whatever was handy.

SMITH

I guess you believe the saying that the only good Indian is a dead Indian.

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GRANDMOTHER

I dunno. We roiled them up considerable. They was mostly friendly when let be. Didn't want to give up their land—but I've noticed something of the same nature in white folks.

SMITH

Your son has—something of that nature, hasn't he?

GRANDMOTHER

He's not keen to sell. Why should he? It'll never be worth less.

SMITH

But since he has more land than any man can use, and if he gets his price—

GRANDMOTHER

That what you've come to talk to him about?

SMITH

I—yes.

GRANDMOTHER

Well, you're not the first. Many a man older than you has come to argue it.

SMITH

[*Smiling.*] They thought they'd try a young one.

GRANDMOTHER

Some one that knew him thought that up. Silas'd help a young one if he could. What is it you're set on buying?

INHERITORS

SMITH

Oh, I don't know that we're set on buying anything. If we could have the hill [*Looking off to the right*] at a fair price—

GRANDMOTHER

The hill above the town? Silas'd rather sell me and the cat.

SMITH

But what's he going to do with it?

GRANDMOTHER

Maybe he's going to climb it once a week.

SMITH

But if the development of the town demands its use—

GRANDMOTHER

[*Smiling.*] You the development of the town?

SMITH

I represent it. This town has been growing so fast—

GRANDMOTHER

This town began to grow the day I got here.

SMITH

You—you began it?

GRANDMOTHER

My husband and I began it—and our baby Silas.

SMITH

When was that?

INHERITORS

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GRANDMOTHER

1820, that was.

SMITH

And—you mean you were here all alone?

GRANDMOTHER

No, we weren't alone. We had the Owens ten miles down the river.

SMITH

But how did you get here?

GRANDMOTHER

Got here in a wagon, how do you s'pose? [*Gayly*]
Think we flew?

SMITH

But wasn't it unsafe?

GRANDMOTHER

Them set on safety staid back in Ohio.

SMITH

But one family! I should think the Indians would have wiped you out.

GRANDMOTHER

The way they wiped us out was to bring fish and corn. We'd have starved to death that first winter hadn't been for the Indians.

SMITH

But if they were such good neighbors—why did you throw dish water at them?

GRANDMOTHER

That was after other white folks had roiled them up—white folks that didn't know how to treat 'em. This very land—land you want to buy—was the land they loved—Blackhawk and his Indians. They came here for their games. This was where their fathers—as they called 'em—were buried. I've seen my husband and Blackhawk climb that hill together. [*A backward point right.*] He used to love that hill—Blackhawk. He talked how the red man and the white man could live together. But poor old Blackhawk—what he didn't know was how many white man there was. After the war—when he was beaten but not conquered in his heart—they took him east—Washington, Philadelphia, New York—and when he saw the white man's cities—it was a different Indian came back. He just let his heart break without ever turning a hand.

SMITH

But we paid them for their lands. [*She looks at him.*] Paid them something.

GRANDMOTHER

Something. For fifteen million acres of this Mississippi Valley land—best on this globe, we paid two thousand two hundred and thirty-four dollars and fifty cents, and promised to deliver annually goods to the value of one thousand dollars. Not a fancy price—even for them days.

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[*Children's voices are heard outside. She leans forward and looks through the door, left.*] Ira! Let that cat be!

SMITH

[*Looking from the window.*] These, I suppose, are your grandchildren?

GRANDMOTHER

The boy's my grandson. The little girl is Madeline Fejevary—Mr. Fejevary's youngest child.

SMITH

The Fejevary place adjoins on this side?

[*Pointing right, down.*]

GRANDMOTHER

Yes. We've been neighbors ever since the Fejevarys came here from Hungary after 1848. He was a count at home—and he's a man of learning. But he was a refugee because he fought for freedom in his country. Nothing Silas could do for him was too good. Silas sets great store by learning—and freedom.

SMITH

[*Thinking of his own project, looking off toward the hill—the hill is not seen from the front.*] I suppose then Mr. Fejevary has great influence with your son?

GRANDMOTHER

More 'an anybody. Silas thinks 'twas a great thing for our family to have a family like theirs next place to. Well—so 'twas, for we've had no time for the things their family was brought up in. Old Mrs. Fejevary

[*with her shrewd smile*]*—she weren't stuck up—but she did have an awful ladylike way of feeding the chickens. Silas thinks—oh my son has all kinds of notions—though a harder worker never found his bed at night.*

SMITH

And Mr. Fejevary—is he a veteran too?

GRANDMOTHER

[*Dryly.*] You don't seem to know these parts well—for one that's all stirred up about the development of the town. Yes—Felix Fejevary and Silas Morton went off together, down that road [*motioning with her hand, right*]*—when them of their age was wanted. Fejevary came back with one arm less than he went with. Silas brought home everything he took—and something he didn't. Rheumatiz. So now they set more store by each other 'an ever. Seems nothing draws men together like killing other men. [*A boy's voice teasingly imitating a cat.*] Madeline, make Ira let that cat be. [*A whoop from the girl—a boy's whoop.*] [*Looking.*] There they go, off for the creek. If they set in it—[*Seems about to call after them, gives this up.*] Well, they're not the first.*

[*Rather dreams over this.*

SMITH

You must feel as if you pretty near owned this country.

GRANDMOTHER

We worked. A country don't make itself. When the sun was up we were up, and when the sun went

down we didn't. [*As if this renews the self of those days.*] Here—let me set out something for you to eat.
[*Gets up with difficulty.*]

SMITH

Oh, no, please—never mind. I had something in town before I came out.

GRANDMOTHER

Dunno as that's any reason you shouldn't have something here.

[*She goes off, right; he stands at the door, looking toward the hill until she returns with a glass of milk, a plate of cookies.*]

SMITH

Well, this looks good.

GRANDMOTHER

I've fed a lot of folks—take it by and large. I didn't care how many I had to feed in the daytime—what's ten or fifteen more when you're up and around. But to get up—after sixteen hours on your feet—I was willin', but my bones complained some.

SMITH

But did you—keep a tavern?

GRANDMOTHER

Keep a tavern? I guess we did. Every house is a tavern when houses are sparse. You think the way to settle a country is to go on ahead and build hotels?

That's all you folks know. Why, I never went to bed without leaving something on the stove for the new ones that might be coming. And we never went away from home without seein' there was aplenty for them that might stop.

SMITH

They'd come right in and take your food?

GRANDMOTHER

What else could they do? There was a woman I always wanted to know. She made a kind of bread I never had before—and left aplenty for our supper when we got back with the ducks and berries. And she left the kitchen handier than it had ever been. I often wondered about her—where she came from, and where she went. [*As she dreams over this there is laughing and talking at the side of the house.*] There come the boys.

[MR. FEJEVARY comes in, followed by SILAS MORTON. They are men not far from sixty, wearing their army uniforms, carrying the muskets they used in the parade. FEJEVARY has a lean, distinguished face, his dark eyes are penetrating and rather wistful. The left sleeve of his old uniform is empty. SILAS MORTON is a strong man who has borne the burden of the land, and not for himself alone—the pioneer. Seeing the stranger, he sets his musket against the wall and holds out his hand to him, as MR. FEJEVARY goes up to GRANDMOTHER MORTON.]

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SILAS

How'do, stranger?

FEJEVARY

And how are you today, Mrs. Morton?

GRANDMOTHER

I'm not abed—and don't expect to be.

SILAS

[*Letting go one of the balloons he has bought.*]
Where's Ira? And Madeline?

GRANDMOTHER

Mr. Fejevary's Delia brought them home with her. They've gone down to dam the creek, I guess. This young man's been waiting to see you, Silas.

SMITH

Yes, I wanted to have a little talk with you.

SILAS

Well, why not? [*He is tying the gay balloons to his gun, then as he talks, hangs his hat in the corner closet.*] We've been having a little talk ourselves. Mother, Nat Rice was there. I've not seen Nat Rice since the day we had to leave him on the road with his torn leg—him cursing like a pirate. I wanted to bring him home, but he had to go back to Chicago. His wife's dead, mother.

GRANDMOTHER

Well, I guess she's not sorry.

SILAS

Why, mother.

INHERITORS

GRANDMOTHER

"Why, mother." Nat Rice is a mean, stingy, complaining man—his leg notwithstanding. Where'd you leave the folks?

SILAS

Oh—scattered around. Everybody visitin' with anybody that'll visit with them. Wish you could have gone.

GRANDMOTHER

I've heard it all. [*To FEJEVARY.*] Your folks well?

FEJEVARY

All well, Mrs. Morton. And my boy Felix is home. He'll stop in here to see you by and by.

SILAS

Oh, he's a fine looking boy, mother. And think of what he knows! [*Cordially including the young man.*] Mr. Fejevary's son has been to Harvard College.

SMITH

Well, well—quite a trip. Well, Mr. Morton, I hope this is not a bad time for me to—present a little matter to you?

SILAS

[*Genially.*] That depends, of course, on what you're going to present. [*Attracted by a sound outside.*] Mind if I present a little matter to your horse? Like to uncheck him so's he can get a bite o' grass.

SMITH

Why—yes. I suppose he would like that.

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SILAS

[*Going out.*] You bet he'd like it. Wouldn't you, old boy?

SMITH

Your son is fond of animals.

GRANDMOTHER

Lots of people's fond of 'em—and good to 'em. Silas—I dunno, it's as if he was that animal.

FEJEVARY

He has imagination.

GRANDMOTHER

[*With surprise.*] Think so?

SILAS

[*Returning and sitting down at the table by the young man.*] Now, what's in your mind, my boy?

SMITH

This town is growing very fast, Mr. Morton.

SILAS

Yes. [*Styly—with humor.*] I know that.

SMITH

I presume you, as one of the early settlers—as in fact a son of the earliest settler, feel a certain responsibility about the welfare of—

SILAS

I haven't got it in mind to do the town a bit of harm. So—what's your point?

SMITH

More people—more homes. And homes must be in the healthiest places—the—the most beautiful places. Isn't it true, Mr. Fejevary, that it means a great deal to people to have a beautiful outlook from their homes? A—well, an expanse.

SILAS

What is it they want to buy—these fellows that are figuring on making something out of—expanse? [*A gesture for expanse, then a reassuring gesture.*] It's all right, but—just what is it?

SMITH

I am prepared to make you an offer—a gilt-edged offer for that [*pointing toward it*] hill above the town.

SILAS

[*Shaking his head—with the smile of the strong man who is a dreamer.*] The hill is not for sale.

SMITH

But wouldn't you consider a—particularly good offer, Mr. Morton?

[*SILAS, who has turned so he can look out at the hill, slowly shakes his head.*]

SMITH

Do you quite feel you have the right—the moral right to hold it?

SILAS

It's not for myself I'm holding it.

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SMITH

Oh,—for the children?

SILAS

Yes, the children.

SMITH

But—if you'll excuse me—there are other investments might do the children even more good.

SILAS

This seems to me—the best investment.

SMITH

But after all there are other people's children to consider.

SILAS

Yes, I know. That's it.

SMITH

I wonder if I understand you, Mr. Morton?

SILAS

[*Kindly.*] I don't believe you do. I don't see how you could. And I can't explain myself just now. So—the hill is not for sale. I'm not making anybody homeless. There's land enough for all—all sides round. But the hill—

SMITH

[*Rising.*] Is yours.

SILAS

You'll see.

SMITH

I am prepared to offer you—

SILAS

You're not prepared to offer me anything I'd consider alongside what I am considering. So—I wish you good luck in your business undertakings.

SMITH

Sorry—you won't let us try to help the town.

SILAS

Don't sit up nights worrying about my chokin' the town.

SMITH

We could make you a rich man, Mr. Morton. Do you think what you have in mind will make you so much richer?

SILAS

Much richer.

SMITH

Well, good-bye. Good day, sir. Good day, ma'am.

SILAS

[*Following him to the door.*] Nice horse you've got.

SMITH

Yes, seems all right.

[*SILAS stands in the doorway and looks off at the hill.*]

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GRANDMOTHER

What are you going to do with the hill, Silas?

SILAS

After I get a little glass of wine—to celebrate Felix and me being here instead of farther south—I'd like to tell you what I want for the hill. [*To Fejevary rather bashfully.*] I've been wanting to tell you.

FEJEVARY

I want to know.

SILAS

[*Getting the wine from the closet.*] Just a little something to show our gratitude with.

[*Goes off right for glasses.*]

GRANDMOTHER

I dunno. Maybe it'd be better to sell the hill—while they're anxious.

FEJEVARY

He seems to have another plan for it.

GRANDMOTHER

Yes. Well, I hope the other plan does bring him something. Silas has worked—all the days of his life.

FEJEVARY

I know.

GRANDMOTHER

You don't know the hull of it. But I know. [*Rather to herself.*] Know too well to think about it.

GRANDMOTHER

[*As SILAS returns.*] I'll get more cookies.

SILAS

I'll get them, mother.

GRANDMOTHER

Get 'em myself. Pity if a woman can't set out her own cookies.

SILAS

[*Seeing how hard it is for her.*] I wish mother would let us do things for her.

FEJEVARY

That strength is a flame frailness can't put out. It's a great thing for us to have her,—this touch with the life behind us.

SILAS

Yes. And it's a great thing for us to have you—who can see those things and say them. What a lot I'd 'a'missed if I hadn't had what you've seen.

FEJEVARY

Oh, you only think that because you've got to be generous.

SILAS

I'm not generous. *I'm* seeing something now. Something about you. I've been thinking of it a good deal lately—it's got something to do with—with the hill. I've been thinkin' what it's meant all these years to have a family like yours next place to. They did something pretty nice for the corn belt when they drove you out

of Hungary. Funny—how things don't end the way they begin. I mean, what begins don't end. It's another thing ends. Set out to do something for your own country—and maybe you don't quite do the thing you set out to do—

FEJEVARY

No.

SILAS

But do something for a country a long way off.

FEJEVARY

I'm afraid I've not done much for any country.

SILAS

[*Brusquely.*] Where's your left arm—may I be so bold as to inquire? Though your left arm's nothing alongside—what can't be measured.

FEJEVARY

When I think of what I dreamed as a young man—it seems to me my life has failed.

SILAS

[*Raising his glass.*] Well, if your life's failed—I like failure

[*Grandmother Morton returns with her cookies.*]

GRANDMOTHER

There's two kinds—Mr. Fejevary. These have seeds in 'em.

INHERITORS

FEJEVARY

Thank you. I'll try a seed cookie first.

SILAS

Mother, you'll have a little glass of wine?

GRANDMOTHER

I don't need wine.

SILAS

Well, I don't know as we need it.

GRANDMOTHER

No, I don't know as you do. But I didn't go to war.

FEJEVARY

Then have a little wine to celebrate that.

GRANDMOTHER

Well, just a mite to warm me up. Not that it's cold. [*Fejevary brings it to her, and the cookies.*] The Indians used to like cookies. I was talking to that young whippersnapper about the Indians. One time I saw an Indian watching me from a bush. [*Points.*] Right out there. I was never afraid of Indians when you could see the whole of em—but when you could see nothin' but their bright eyes—movin' through leaves—I declare they made me nervous. After he'd been there an hour I couldn't seem to put my mind on my work. So I thought, Red or White, a man's a man—I'll take him some cookies.

FEJEVARY

It succeeded?

GRANDMOTHER

So well that those leaves had eyes next day. But he brought me a fish to trade. He was a nice boy.

SILAS

Probably we killed him.

GRANDMOTHER

I dunno. Maybe he killed us. Will Owens' family was massacred just after this. Like as not my cookie Indian helped out there. Something kind of uncertain about the Indians.

SILAS

I guess they'found something kind of uncertain about us.

GRANDMOTHER

Six o' one and half a dozen of another. Usually is.

SILAS

[*To FEJEVARY.*] I wonder if I'm wrong. You see, I never went to school—

GRANDMOTHER

I don't know why you say that, Silas. There was two winters you went to school.

SILAS

Yes, mother, and I'm glad I did, for I learned to read there, and I liked the geography globe. It made the earth so nice to think about. And one day the teacher told us all about the stars, and I had that to think of when I was driving at night. The other boys didn't be-

lieve it was so. But I knew it was so! But I mean school—the way Mr. Fejevary went to school. He went to universities. In his own countries—in other countries. All the things men have found out, the wisest and finest things men have thought since first they began to think—all that was put before him.

FEJEVARY

[*With a gentle smile.*] I fear I left a good deal of it untouched.

SILAS

You took aplenty. Tell in your eyes you've thought lots about what's been thought. And that's what I was setting out to say. It makes something of men—learning. A house that's full of books makes a different kind of people. Oh, of course, if the books aren't there just to show off.

GRANDMOTHER

Like in Mary Baldwin's new house.

SILAS

[*Trying hard to see it.*] It's not the learning itself—it's the life that grows up from learning. Learning's like soil. Like—like fertilizer. Get richer. See more. Feel more. You believe that?

FEJEVARY

Culture should do it.

SILAS

Does in your house. You somehow know how it is for the other fellow more 'n we do.

GRANDMOTHER

Well, Silas Morton, when you've your wood to chop an' your water to carry, when you kill your own cattle and hogs, tend your own horses and hens, make your butter, soap, and cook for whoever the Lord sends,—there's none too many hours of the day left to be polite in.

SILAS

You're right, mother. It had to be that way. But now that we buy our soap,—we don't want to say what soap-making made us.

GRANDMOTHER

We're honest.

SILAS

Yes. In a way. But there's another kind o' honesty, seems to me, goes with that more seein' kind of kindness. Our honesty with the Indians was little to brag on.

GRANDMOTHER

You fret more about the Indians than anybody else does.

SILAS

To look out at that hill sometimes makes me ashamed.

GRANDMOTHER

Land sakes, you didn't do it. It was the government. And what a government does is nothing for a person to be ashamed of.

INHERITORS

SILAS

I don't know about that. Why is *he* here? Why is Felix Fejevary not rich and grand in Hungary today? 'Cause he was ashamed of what his government was.

GRANDMOTHER

Well, that was a foreign government.

SILAS

A seeing how 'tis for the other person—a *bein'* that other person, kind of honesty. Joke of it, 'twould do something for *you*. 'Twould 'a done something for us to have *been* Indians a little more. My father used to talk about Blackhawk—they was friends. I saw Blackhawk once—when I was a boy. [*To FEJEVARY.*] Guess I told you. You know what he looked like? He looked like the great of the earth. Noble. Noble like the forests—and the Mississippi—and the stars. His face was long and thin and you could see the bones and the bones were beautiful. Looked like something that's never been caught. He was something many nights in his canoe had made him. Sometimes I feel that the land itself has got a mind and that the land would rather have had the Indians.

GRANDMOTHER

Well don't let folks hear you say it. They'd think you was plum crazy.

SILAS

I s'pose they would. [*Turning to FEJEVARY.*] But after you've walked a long time over the earth—and you all alone, didn't you ever feel something coming up from it that's like thought?

FEJEVARY

I'm afraid I never did. But—I wish I had.

SILAS

I love land—this land. I suppose that's why I never have the feeling that I own it.

GRANDMOTHER

If you don't own it—I want to know! What do you think we come here for—your father and me? What do you think we left our folks for—left the world of white folks—schools and stores and doctors and set out in a covered wagon for we didn't know what? We lost a horse. Lost our way—weeks longer than we thought 'twould be. You were born in that covered wagon. You know that. But what you don't know is what *that's* like—without your own roof—or fire—without—

[*She turns her face away.*]

SILAS

No. No, mother, of course not. Now—now isn't this too bad? I don't say things right. It's because I never went to school.

GRANDMOTHER

[*Her face shielded.*] You went to school two winters.

SILAS

Yes. Yes, mother. So I did. And I'm glad I did.

GRANDMOTHER

[*With the determination of one who will not have her own pain looked at.*] Mrs. Fejevary's pansy bed doing well this summer?

FEJEVARY

It's beautiful this summer. She was so pleased with the new purple kind you gave her. I do wish you could get over and see them.

GRANDMOTHER

Yes. Well, I've seen lots of pansies. Suppose it was pretty fine-sounding speeches they had in town?

FEJEVARY

Too fine sounding to seem much like the war.

SILAS

I'd like to go to a war celebration where they never mentioned war. There'd be a way to celebrate victory. [*Hearing a step, looking out.*] Mother, here's Felix. [*FELIX, a well-dressed young man comes in.*]

GRANDMOTHER

How do, Felix?

FELIX

And how do you do, Grandmother Morton?

GRANDMOTHER

Well, I'm still here.

FELIX

Of course you are. It wouldn't be coming home if you weren't.

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GRANDMOTHER

I've got some cookies for you, Felix. I set 'em out, so you wouldn't have to steal them. John and Felix was hard on the cookie jar.

FELIX

Where is John?

SILAS

[*Who is pouring a glass of wine for FELIX.*] You've not seen John yet? He was in town for the exercises. I bet those young devils ran off to the race-track. I heard whisperin' goin' round. But everybody'll be home sometime. Mary and the girls—don't ask me where they are. They'll drive old Bess all over the county before they drive her to the barn. Your father and I come on home 'cause I wanted to have a talk with him.

FELIX

Getting into the old uniforms makes you want to talk it all over again?

SILAS

The war? Well, we did do that. But all that makes me want to talk about what's to come, about—what 'twas all for. Great things are to come, Felix. And before you are through.

FELIX

I've been thinking about them myself—walking around the town today. It's grown so much this year, and in a way that means more growing—that big

glocuse plant going up down the river, the new lumber mill—all that means many more people.

FEJEVARY

And they've even bought ground for a steel works.

SILAS

Yes, a city will rise from these cornfields—a big rich place—that's bound to be. It's written in the lay o' the land and the way the river flows. But first tell us about Harvard College, Felix. Ain't it a fine thing for us all to have Felix coming home from that wonderful place!

FELIX

You make it seem wonderful.

SILAS

Ah, you know it's wonderful—know it so well you don't have to say it. It's something you've got. But to me it's wonderful the way the stars are wonderful—this place where all that the world has learned is to be drawn from like—like a spring.

FELIX

You almost say what Matthew Arnold says—a distinguished new English writer who speaks of: "The best that has been thought and said in the world."

SILAS

"The best that has been thought and said in the world!" [*Slowly rising, and as if the dream of years is bringing him to his feet.*] That's what that hill is for! [*Pointing.*] Don't you see it? End of our trail,

we climb a hill and plant a college. Plant a college, so's after we are gone that college says for us, says in people learning has made more: "This is why we took this land!"

GRANDMOTHER

[*Incredulous.*] You mean, Silas, you're going to *give the hill away?*

SILAS

The hill at the end of our trail—how could we keep that?

GRANDMOTHER

Well I want to know why not! Hill or level—land's land and not a thing you give away.

SILAS

Well, don't scold *me*. I'm not giving it away. It's giving itself away, get down to it.

GRANDMOTHER

Don't talk to me as if I was feeble-minded.

SILAS

I'm talking with all the mind I've got. If there's not mind in what I say, it's because I've got no mind. But I have got a mind. [*To FEJEVARY, humorously.*] Haven't I? You ought to know. Seeing as you gave it to me.

FEJEVARY

Ah no—I didn't give it to you.

SILAS

Well, you made me know 'twas there. You said things that woke things in me and I thought about them as I ploughed. And that made me know there had to be a college there—wake things in minds—so ploughin's more than ploughing. What do you say, Felix?

FELIX

It—it's a big idea, Uncle Silas. I love the way you put it. It's only that I'm wondering—

SILAS

Wondering how it can ever be a Harvard College? Well it can't. And it needn't be. [*Stubbornly.*] It's a college in the cornfields—where the Indian maize once grew. And it's for the boys of the cornfields—and the girls. There's few can go to Harvard College—but more can climb that hill. [*Turn of the head from the hill to FELIX.*] Harvard on a hill? [*As FELIX smiles no, SILAS turns back to the hill.*] A college should be on a hill. They can see it then from far around. See it as they go out to the barn in the morning; see it when they're shutting up at night. 'Twill make a difference—even to them that never go.

GRANDMOTHER

Now, Silas—don't be hasty.

SILAS

Hasty? It's been company to me for years. Came to me one night—must 'a' been ten years ago—middle of a starry night as I was comin' home from your place. [*To FEJEVARY.*] I'd gone over to lend a hand with a sick horse an'—

FEJEVARY

[*With a grateful smile.*] That was nothing new.

SILAS

Well, say, I'd sit up with a sick horse that belonged to the meanest man unhung. But—there were stars that night had never been there before. Leastways I'd not seen 'em. And the hill—Felix, in all your travels east, did you ever see anything more beautiful than that hill?

FELIX

It's like sculpture.

SILAS

Hm. [*The wistfulness with which he speaks of that outside his knowledge.*] I s'pose 'tis. It's the way it rises—somehow—as if it knew it rose from wide and fertile lands. I climbed the hill that night. [*To FEJEVARY.*] You'd been talkin'. As we waited between medicines you told me about your life as a young man. All you'd lived through seemed to —open up to you that night—way things do at times. Guess it was 'cause you thought you was goin' to lose your horse. See, that was Colonel, the sorrel, wasn't it?

FEJEVARY

Yes. Good old Colonel.

SILAS

You'd had a long run o' off luck. Hadn't got things back in shape since the war. But say, you didn't lose him, did you?

INHERITORS

FEJEVARY

Thanks to you.

SILAS

Thanks to the medicine I keep in the back kitchen.

FEJEVARY

You encouraged him.

GRANDMOTHER

Silas has a way with all the beasts.

SILAS

We've got the same kind of minds—the beasts and me.

GRANDMOTHER

Silas, I wish you wouldn't talk like that—and with Felix just home from Harvard College.

SILAS

Same kind of minds—except that mine goes on a little farther.

GRANDMOTHER

Well, I'm glad to hear you say that.

SILAS

Well, there we sat—you an' me—middle of a starry night, out beside your barn. And I guess it came over you kind of funny you should be there with me—way off the Mississippi, tryin' to save a sick horse. Seemed to—bring your life to life again. You told me what you studied in that fine old university you loved—in

Vienna,—and why you became a revolutionist. The old dreams took hold o' you and you talked—way you used to, I suppose. The years, o'course, had rubbed some of it off. Your face as you went on about the vision—you called it, vision of what life could be. I knew that night there was things I had never got wind of. When I went away—knew I ought to go home to bed—hayin' at daybreak. "Go to bed?" I said to myself. "Strike this dead when you've never had it before, may never have it again?" I climbed the hill. Blackhawk was there.

GRANDMOTHER

Why he was *dead*.

SILAS

He was there—on his own old hill, with me and the stars. And I said to him—

GRANDMOTHER

Silas!

SILAS

Says I to him, "Yes—that's true; it's more yours than mine, you had it first and loved it best. But it's neither yours nor mine,—though both yours and mine. Not my hill, not your hill, but—hill of vision, said I to him. Here shall come visions of a better world than was ever seen by you or me, old Indian chief. Oh, I was drunk, plum drunk.

GRANDMOTHER

I should think you was. And what about the next day's hay?

SILAS

A day in the hayfield is a day's hayin'—but a night on the hill—

FELIX

We don't have them often, do we, Uncle Silas?

SILAS

I wouldn't 'a had that one but for your father, Felix. Thank God they drove you out o' Hungary! And it's all so dog-gone *queer*. Ain't it queer how things blow from mind to mind—like seeds. Lord A'mighty—you don't know where they'll take hold.

[*Children's voices off.*]

GRANDMOTHER

There come those children up from the creek—soppin' wet, I warrant. Well, I don't know how children ever get raised. But we raise more of 'em than we used to. I buried three—first ten years I was here. Needn't 'a happened—if we'd known what we know now, and if we hadn't been alone. [*With all her strength.*] I don't know what you mean—the hill's not yours!

SILAS

It's the future's, mother—so's we can know more than we know now.

GRANDMOTHER

We know it now. 'Twas then we didn't know it. I worked for that hill! And I tell you to leave it to your own children.

SILAS

There's other land for my own children. This is for all the children.

GRANDMOTHER

What's all the children to you?

SILAS

[*Derisively.*] Oh, mother—what a thing for you to say! You who were never too tired to give up your own bed so the stranger could have a better bed.

GRANDMOTHER

That was different. They was folks on their way.

FEJEVARY

So are we.

[*SILAS turns to him with quick appreciation.*]

GRANDMOTHER

That's just talk. We're settled now. Children of other old settlers are getting rich. I should think you'd want yours to.

SILAS

I want other things more. I want to pay my debts 'fore I'm too old to know they're debts.

GRANDMOTHER

[*Momentarily startled.*] Debts? Huh! More talk. You don't owe any man.

SILAS

I owe him. [*Nodding to FEJEVARY.*] And the red boys here before me.

GRANDMOTHER

Fiddlesticks.

FELIX

You haven't read Darwin, have you, Uncle Silas?

SILAS

Who?

FELIX

Darwin, the great new man—and his theory of the survival of the fittest?

SILAS

No. No, I don't know things like that, Felix.

FELIX

I think he might make you feel better about the Indians. In the struggle for existence, many must go down. The fittest survive. This—had to be.

SILAS

Us and the Indians? Guess I don't know what you mean—fittest.

FELIX

He calls it that. Best fitted to the place in which one finds one's self, having the qualities that can best cope with conditions—do things. From the beginning of life it's been like that. He shows the growth of life

from forms that were barely alive, the lowest animal forms—jellyfish—up to man.

SILAS

Oh, yes, that's the thing the churches are so upset about—that we come from monkeys.

FELIX

Yes. One family of ape is the direct ancestor of man.

GRANDMOTHER

You'd better read your Bible, Felix.

SILAS

Do people believe this?

FELIX

The whole intellectual world is at war about it. The best scientists accept it. Teachers are losing their positions for believing it. Of course, ministers can't believe it.

GRANDMOTHER

I should think not. Anyway, what's the use believing a thing that's so discouraging?

FEJEVARY

[*Gently.*] But is it that? It almost seems to me we have to accept it because it is so encouraging. [*Holding out his hand.*] Why have we hands?

GRANDMOTHER

Cause God gave them to us, I s'pose.

FEJEVARY

But that's rather general, and there isn't much in it to give us self-confidence. But when you think we have hands because ages back—before life had taken form as man, there was an impulse to do what had never been done—when you think that we have hands today because from the first of life there have been adventurers—those of best brain and courage who wanted to be more than life had been, and that from aspiration has come doing, and doing has shaped the thing with which to do—it gives our hand a history which should make us want to use it well.

SILAS

[*Breathed from deep.*] Well, by God! And you've known this all this while! Dog-gone you—why didn't you tell me?

FEJEVARY

I've been thinking about it. I haven't known what to believe. This hurts—beliefs of earlier years.

FELIX

The things it hurts will have to go.

FEJEVARY

I don't know about that, Felix. Perhaps in time we'll find truth in them.

FELIX

Oh, if you feel that way, father.

FEJEVARY

Don't be kind to me, my boy, I'm not that old.

SILAS

But think what it is you've said! If it's true that we *made* ourselves—made ourselves out of the wanting to be more—created ourselves you might say, by our own courage—our—what is it?—aspiration. Why, I can't take it in. I haven't got the mind to take it in. And what mind I have got says no. It's too—

FEJEVARY

It fights with what's there.

SILAS

[*Nodding.*] But it's like I got this [*very slowly*] other way around. From underneath. As if I'd known it all along—but have just found out I know it! Yes. The earth told me. The beasts told me.

GRANDMOTHER

Fine place to learn things from.

SILAS

Anyhow, haven't I seen it? [*To FEJEVARY.*] In your face haven't I seen thinking make a finer face? How long has this taken Felix to—well, you might say, bring us where we are now?

FELIX

Oh, we don't know how many millions of years since earth first stirred.

SILAS

Then we are what we are because through all that time there've been them that wanted to be more than life had been.

INHERITORS

FELIX

That's it, Uncle Silas.

SILAS

But—why, then we aren't *finished* yet!

FEJEVARY

No. We take it on from here.

SILAS

[*Slowly.*] Then if we don't be—the most we can be, if we don't be more than life has been, we go back on all that life behind us; go back on—the—

[*Unable to formulate it, he looks to*
FEJEVARY.

FEJEVARY

Go back on the dreaming and the daring of a million years.

[*After a moment's pause SILAS gets up, opens the closet door.*

GRANDMOTHER

Silas, what you doing?

SILAS

[*Who has taken out a box.*] I'm lookin' for the deed to the hill.

GRANDMOTHER

What you going to do with it?

SILAS

I'm goin' to get it out of my hands.

GRANDMOTHER

Get it out of your hands? [*He has it now.*] Deed your father got from the government the very year the government got it from the Indians? [*Rising.*] Give me that! [*She turns to FEJEVARY.*] Tell him he's crazy. We got the best land 'cause we was first here. We got a right to keep it.

FEJEVARY

[*Going soothingly to her.*] It's true, Silas, it is a serious thing to give away one's land.

SILAS

You ought to know. You did it. Are you sorry you did it?

FEJEVARY

No. But wasn't that different?

SILAS

How was it different? Yours was a fight to make life more, wasn't it? Well, let this be our way.

GRANDMOTHER

What's all that got to do with giving up the land that should provide for your own children?

SILAS

Isn't it providing for them to give them a better world to live in? Felix—you're young, I ask you, ain't it providing for them to give them a chance to be more than we are?

INHERITORS

FELIX

I think you're entirely right, Uncle Silas. But it's the practical question that—

SILAS

If you're right, the practical question is just a thing to fix up.

FEJEVARY

I fear you don't realize the immense amount of money required to finance a college. The land would be a start. You would have to interest rich men; you'd have to have a community in sympathy with the thing you wanted to do.

GRANDMOTHER

Can't you see, Silas, that we're all against you?

SILAS

All against me? [*To FEJEVARY.*] But how can you be? Look at the land we walked in and took! Was there ever such a chance to make life more? Why the buffalo here before us was more than we if we do nothing but prosper! God damn us if we sit here rich and fat and forget man's in the makin'. [*Affirming against this.*] There will one day be a college in these cornfields by the Mississippi because long ago a great dream was fought for in Hungary. And I say to that old dream, Wake up, old dream! Wake up and fight! You say rich men. [*Holding it out, but it is not taken.*]

I give you this deed to take to rich men to show them one man believes enough in this to give the best land he's got. That ought to make rich men stop and think.

INHERITORS

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GRANDMOTHER

Stop and think he's a fool.

SILAS

[*To FEJEVARY.*] It's you can make them know he's not a fool. When you tell this way you can tell it, they'll feel in you what's more than them. They'll listen.

GRANDMOTHER

I tell you, Silas, folks are too busy.

SILAS

"Too busy!" Too busy bein' nothin'? If it's true that we created ourselves out of the thoughts that came, then thought is not something *outside* the business of life. Thought—[*with his gift for wonder*] why thought's our *chance*. I know now. Why I can't forget the Indians. We killed their joy before we killed them. We made them less. [*To FEJEVARY, and as if sure he is now making it clear.*] I got to give it back—their hill. I give it back to joy—a better joy—joy o' aspiration.

FEJEVARY

[*Moved but unconvinced.*] But, my friend, there are men who have no aspiration. That's why, to me, this is as a light shining from too far.

GRANDMOTHER

[*Old things waked in her.*] Light shining from far. We used to do that. We never pulled the curtains. I used to want to—you like to be to yourself when night comes—but we always left a lighted window for the traveler who'd lost his way.

INHERITORS

FELIX

I should think that would have exposed you to the Indians.

GRANDMOTHER

Yes. [*Impatiently.*] Well, you can't put out a light just because it may light the wrong person.

FEJEVARY

No. [*And this is as a light to him. He turns to the hill.*] No.

SILAS

[*With gentleness, and profoundly.*] That's it. Look again. Maybe your eyes are stronger now. Don't you see it? I see that college rising as from the soil itself, as if it was what come at the last of that thinking that breathes from the earth. I see it—but I want to know it's real before I stop knowing. Then maybe I can lie under the same sod with the red boys and not be ashamed. We're not old! Let's fight! Wake in other men what you woke in me!

FEJEVARY

And so could I pay my debt to America.

[*His hand goes out.*]

SILAS

[*Giving him the deed.*] And to the dreams of a million years!

[*Standing near the open door their hands are gripped in compact.*]

(CURTAIN)

ACT TWO

SCENE: *A corridor in the library of Morton College, October of the year 1920, upon the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of its founding. This is an open place in the stacks of books, which are seen at both sides. There is a reading table before the big rear window. This window opens out, but does not extend to the floor; only a part of its height is seen, indicating a very high window. Outside is seen the top of a tree.*

This outer wall of the building is on a slant, so that the entrance right is rear, and the left is front. Right front is a section of a huge square column. On the rear of this, facing the window, is hung a picture of SILAS MORTON. Two men are standing before this portrait.

SENATOR LEWIS *is the middle-western state senator. He is not of the city from which Morton College rises, but of a more country community farther in-state. FELIX FEJEVARY, now nearing the age of his father in the first act, is an American of the more sophisticated type—prosperous, having the poise of success in affairs and place in society.*

SENATOR

And this was the boy who founded the place, eh? It was his idea?

FEJEVARY

Yes, and his hill. I was there the afternoon he told my father there must be a college here. I wasn't any older then than my boy is now.

[As if himself surprised by this.]

SENATOR

Well, he enlisted a good man when he let you in on it. I've been told the college wouldn't be what it is today but for you, Mr. Fejevary.

FEJEVARY

I have a sentiment about it, and where our sentiment is, there our work goes also.

SENATOR

Yes. Well, it was those mainsprings of sentiment that won the war.

[He is pleased with this.]

FEJEVARY

[Nodding.] Morton College did her part in winning the war.

SENATOR

I know. A fine showing.

FEJEVARY

And we're holding up our end right along. You'll see the boys drill this afternoon. It's a great place for them, here on the hill—shows up from so far around. They're a fine lot of fellows. You know, I presume, that they went in as strike-breakers during the trouble down here at the steel works. The plant would have

had to close but for Morton College. That's one reason I venture to propose this thing of a state appropriation for enlargement. Why don't we sit down a moment? There's no conflict with the state university—they have their territory, we have ours. Ours is an important one—industrially speaking. The state will lose nothing in having a good strong college here—a one-hundred-percent-American college.

SENATOR

I admit I am very favorably impressed.

FEJEVARY

I hope you'll tell your committee so—and let me have a chance to talk to them.

SENATOR

Let's see, haven't you a pretty radical man here?

FEJEVARY

I wonder if you mean Holden?

SENATOR

Holden's the man. I've read things that make me question his Americanism.

FEJEVARY

Oh—[*Gesture of depreciation.*] I don't think he is so much a radical as a particularly human human-being.

SENATOR

But we don't want radical human beings.

FEJEVARY

He has a genuine sympathy with youth. That's invaluable in a teacher, you know. And then—he's a scholar.

[He betrays here, his feeling of superiority to his companion, but too subtly for his companion to get it.]

SENATOR

Oh—scholar. We can get scholars enough. What we want is Americans.

FEJEVARY

Americans who are scholars.

SENATOR

You can pick 'em off every bush—pay them a little more than they're paid in some other cheap John College. Excuse me—I don't mean this is a cheap John College.

FEJEVARY

Of course not. One couldn't think that of Morton College. But that—pay them a little more, interests me. That's another reason I want to talk to your committee on appropriations. We claim to value education and then we let highly trained, gifted men fall behind the plumber.

SENATOR

Well, that's the plumber's fault. Let the teachers talk to the plumber.

FEJEVARY

[*With a smile.*] No. Better not let them talk to the plumber. He might tell them what to do about it. In fact, is telling them.

SENATOR

That's ridiculous. They can't serve both God and mammon.

FEJEVARY

Then let God give them mammon. I mean, let the state appropriate.

SENATOR

Of course this state, Mr. Fejevary, appropriates no money for radicals. Excuse me, but why do you keep this man Holden?

FEJEVARY

In the scholar's world we're known because of him. And really, Holden's not a radical—in the worst sense. What he doesn't see is—expediency. Not enough the man of affairs to realize that we can't always have literally what we have theoretically. He's an idealist. Something of the—man of vision.

SENATOR

If he had the right vision he'd see that we don't every minute have literally what we have theoretically because we're fighting to keep the thing we have. Oh, I sometimes think the man of affairs has the only vision. Take you, Mr. Fejevary—a banker. These teachers—books—books! [*Pushing all books back.*] Why, if

they had to take for one day the responsibility that falls on your shoulders—big decisions to make—man among men—and all the time worries, irritations, particularly now with labor riding the high horse like a fool! I know something about these things. I went to the State House because my community persuaded me it was my duty. But I'm the man of affairs, myself.

FEJEVARY

Oh yes, I know. Your company did much to develop that whole northern part of the state.

SENATOR

I think I may say we did. Well, that's why, after three sessions, I'm chairman of the appropriations committee. I know how to use money to promote the state. So—teacher? That would be a perpetual vacation to me. Now, if you want my advice, Mr. Fejevary,—I think your case before the state would be stronger if you let this fellow Holden go.

FEJEVARY

I'm going to have a talk with Professor Holden.

SENATOR

Tell him it's for his own good. The idea of a college professor standing up for conscientious objectors!

FEJEVARY

That doesn't quite state the case. Fred Jordan was one of Holden's students—a student he valued. He felt Jordan was perfectly sincere in his objection.

SENATOR

Sincere in his objections! The nerve of him thinking it was his business to be sincere!

FEJEVARY

He was expelled from college—you may remember; that was how we felt about it.

SENATOR

I should hope so.

FEJEVARY

Holden fought that, but within the college. What brought him into the papers was his protest against the way the boy has been treated in prison.

SENATOR

What's the difference how he's treated? You know how I'd treat him? [*A movement as though pulling a trigger.*] If I didn't know you for the American you are, I wouldn't understand your speaking so calmly.

FEJEVARY

I'm simply trying to see it all sides around.

SENATOR

Makes me see red.

FEJEVARY

[*With a smile.*] But we mustn't meet red with red.

SENATOR

What's Holden fussing about—that they don't give him caviar on toast?

FEJEVARY

That they didn't give him books. Holden felt it was his business to fuss about that.

SENATOR

Well, when your own boy 'stead of whining around about his conscience, stood up and offered his life!

FEJEVARY

Yes. And my nephew gave his life.

SENATOR

That so?

FEJEVARY

Silas Morton's grandson died in France. My sister Madeline married Ira Morton, son of Silas Morton.

SENATOR

I knew there was a family connection between you and the Mortons.

FEJEVARY

[*Speaking with reserve.*] They played together as children and married as soon as they were grown up.

SENATOR

So this was your sister's boy? [FEJEVARY *nods.*] One of the mothers to give her son!

FEJEVARY

[*Speaking of her with effort.*] My sister died—long ago. [*Pulled to an old feeling; with an effort releasing himself.*] But Ira is still out at the old place—

place the Morton's took up when they reached the end of their trail—as Uncle Silas used to put it. Why, it's a hundred years ago that Grandmother Morton began—making cookies here. She was the first white woman in this county.

SENATOR

Proud woman! To have begun the life of this state! Oh, our pioneers! If they could only see us now, and know what they did! [FEJEVARY *is silent; he does not look quite happy.*] I suppose Silas Morton's son is active in the college management.

FEJEVARY

No, Ira is not a social being. Fred's death about finished him. He had been—strange for years, ever since my sister died—when the children were little. It was—[*again pulled back to that old feeling*] under pretty terrible circumstances.

SENATOR

I can see that you thought a great deal of your sister, Mr. Fejevary.

FEJEVARY

Oh, she was beautiful and—[*bitterly*] it shouldn't have gone like that.

SENATOR

Seems to me I've heard something about Silas Morton's son—though perhaps it wasn't this one.

FEJEVARY

Ira is the only one living here now; the others have gone farther west.

INHERITORS

SENATOR

Isn't there something about corn?

FEJEVARY

Yes. His corn has several years taken the prize—best in the state. He's experimented with it—created a new kind. They've given it his name—Morton corn. It seems corn is rather fascinating to work with—very mutable stuff. It's a good thing Ira has it, for it's about the only thing he does care for now. Oh, Madeline, of course. He has a daughter here in the college—Madeline Morton, senior this year—one of our best students. I'd like to have you meet Madeline—she's a great girl, though—peculiar.

SENATOR

Well, that makes a girl interesting, if she isn't peculiar the wrong way. Sounds as if her home life might make her a little peculiar.

FEJEVARY

Madeline stays here in town with us a good part of the time. Mrs. Fejevary is devoted to her—we all are. [*A boy starts to come through from right.*] Hello, see who's here. This is my boy. Horace, this is Senator Lewis, who is interested in the college.

HORACE

[*Shaking hands.*] How do you do, Senator Lewis?

SENATOR

Pleased to see you, my boy.

HORACE

Am I butting in?

FEJEVARY

Not seriously ; but what are you doing in the library?
I thought this was a day off.

HORACE

I'm looking for a book.

FEJEVARY

[*Affectionately bantering.*] You are, Horace? Now
how does that happen?

HORACE

I want the speeches of Abraham Lincoln.

SENATOR

You couldn't do better.

HORACE

I'll show those dirty dagoes where they get off!

FEJEVARY

You couldn't show them a little more elegantly?

HORACE

I'm going to sick the Legion on 'em.

FEJEVARY

Are you talking about the Hindus?

HORACE

Yes, the dirty dagoes.

FEJEVARY

Hindus aren't dagoes you know, Horace.

HORACE

Well, what's the difference? This foreign element gets my goat.

SENATOR

My boy, you talk like an American. But what do you mean—Hindus?

FEJEVARY

There are two young Hindus here as students. And they're good students.

HORACE

Sissies.

FEJEVARY

But they must preach the gospel of free India—non-British India.

SENATOR

Oh, that won't do.

HORACE

They're nothing but Reds, I'll say. Well, one of 'em's going back to get his.

[Grins.

FEJEVARY

There were three of them last year. One of them is wanted back home.

SENATOR

I remember now. He's to be deported.

HORACE

And when they get him—[*Movement as of pulling a rope.*] They hang there.

FEJEVARY

The other two protest against our not fighting the deportation of their comrade. They insist it means death to him. [*Brushing off a thing that is inclined to worry him.*] But we can't handle India's affairs.

SENATOR

I should think not!

HORACE

Why, England's our ally! That's what I told them. But you can't argue with people like that. Just wait till I find the speeches of Abraham Lincoln!

[*Passes through to left.*]

SENATOR

Fine boy you have, Mr. Fejevary.

FEJEVARY

He's a live one. You should see him in a football game. Wouldn't hurt my feelings in the least to have him a little more of a student, but—

SENATOR

Oh, well, you want him to be a regular fellow, don't you, and grow into a man among men?

FEJEVARY

He'll do that, I think. It was he who organized our boys for the steel strike—went right in himself and took a striker's job. He came home with a black eye one night, presented to him by a picket who started something by calling him a scab. But Horace wasn't thinking about his eye. According to him, it was not in the class with the striker's upper lip. "Father," he said, "I gave him more red than he could swallow. The blood just—" Well, I'll spare you—but Horace's muscle is one hundred per cent American. [*Going to the window.*] Let me show you something. You can see the old Morton place off on that first little hill. [*Pointing left.*] The first rise beyond the valley.

SENATOR

The long low house?

FEJEVARY

That's it. You see the town for the most part swung around the other side of the hill, so the Morton place is still a farm.

SENATOR

But you're growing all the while. The town'll take the cornfield yet.

FEJEVARY

Yes, our steel works is making us a city.

SENATOR

And this old boy [*turning to the portrait of SILAS MORTON*] can look out on his old home—and watch the valley grow.

FEJEVARY

Yes—that was my idea. His picture really should be in Memorial Hall, but I thought Uncle Silas would like to be up here among the books, and facing the old place. [*With a laugh.*] I confess to being a little sentimental.

SENATOR

We Americans have lots of sentiment, Mr. Fejevary. It's what makes us—what we are. [FEJEVARY *does not speak; there are times when the senator seems to trouble him.*] Well, this is a great site for a college. You can see it from the whole country round.

FEJEVARY

Yes, that was Uncle Silas' idea. He had a reverence for education. It grew, in part, out of his feeling for my father. He was a poet—really, Uncle Silas. [*Looking at the picture.*] He gave this hill for a college that we might become a deeper, more sensitive people—

[*Two girls, convulsed with the giggles, come tumbling in.*]

DORIS

[*Confused.*] Oh—oh, excuse us.

FUSSIE

[*Foolishly.*] We didn't know anybody was here.

[MR. FEJEVARY *looks at them sternly.*
The girls retreat.]

SENATOR

[*Laughing.*] Oh, well, girls will be girls. I've got three of my own.

[*Horace come back, carrying an open book.*]

HORACE

Say, this must be a misprint.

FEJEVARY

[*Glancing at the back of the book.*] Oh, I think not.

HORACE

From his first inaugural address to Congress, March 4, 1861. [*Reads.*] "This country with its institutions belongs to the people who inhabit it." Well, that's all right. "Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it,"—[*after a brief consideration*] I suppose that that's all right—but listen! "or their *revolutionary* right to dismember or overthrow it."

FEJEVARY

He was speaking in another age. An age of different values.

SENATOR

Terms change their significance from generation to generation.

HORACE

I suppose they do—but that puts me in bad with these lice. They quoted this and I said they were liars.

SENATOR

And what's the idea? They're weary of our existing government and are about to dismember or overthrow it?

HORACE

I guess that's the dope.

FEJEVARY

Look here, Horace—speak accurately. Was it in relation to America they quoted this?

HORACE

Well, maybe they were talking about India then. But they were standing up for being revolutionists. We were giving them an earful about it, and then they sprung Lincoln on us. Got their nerve—I'll say—quoting Lincoln to us.

SENATOR

The fact that they are quoting it shows it's being misapplied.

HORACE

[*Approvingly.*] I'll tell them that. But gee—Lincoln oughta been more careful what he said. Ignorant people don't know how to take such things.

[*Goes back with book.*]

FEJEVARY

Want to take a look through the rest of the library? We haven't been up this way yet—[*Motioning left.*] We need a better scientific library. [*They are leaving now.*] Oh, we simply must have more money. The whole thing is fairly bursting its shell.

DORIS

[*Venturing in cautiously, from the other side, looking back, beckoning.*] They've gone.

FUSSIE

Sure?

DORIS

Well, are they here? And I saw them, I tell you—they went up to science.

FUSSIE

[*Moving the SENATOR'S hat on the table.*] But they'll come back.

DORIS

What if they do? We're only looking at a book. [*Running her hand along the books*] Matthew Arnold.

[*Takes a paper from FUSSIE, puts it in the book. They are bent with giggling as Horace returns.*]

HORACE

For the love o' Pete, what's the joke? [*Taking the book from the helpless girl.*] Matthew Arnold. My idea of nowhere to go for a laugh. When I wrote my theme on him last week he was so dry I had to go out and get a Morton Sundee. [*The girls are freshly attacked, though all of this in a subdued way, mindful of others in the library.*] Say, how'd you get that way?

DORIS

Now, Horace, don't you tell.

HORACE

What'd I tell, except—[*seeing the paper*] Um hum—what's this?

DORIS

[*Trying to get it from him.*] Horace, now *don't* you.
[*A tussle.*] You great strong mean thing! Fussie!
Make him *stop*.

[*She gets the paper by tearing it.*]

HORACE

My dad's around here—showing the college off to a politician. If you don't come across with that sheet of mystery, I'll back you both out there [*starts to do it*] and—

DORIS

Horace! You're just *horrid*.

HORACE

Sure I'm horrid. That's the way I want to be.
[*Takes the paper, reads.*] "To Eben
You are the idol of my dreams
I worship from afar."

What *is* this?

FUSSIE

Now, listen, Horace, and don't you *tell*. You know Eben Weeks. He's the homeliest man in school. Wouldn't you say so?

HORACE

Awful jay. Like to get some of the jays out of here.

DORIS

But listen. Of course, no girl would *look* at him. So we've thought up the most *killing* joke. [*Stopped by giggles from herself and FUSSIE.*] Now, he hasn't

handed in his Matthew Arnold dope. I heard old Mac hold him up for it—and what'd you think he said? That he'd been *ploughing*. Said he was trying to run a farm and go to college at the same time! Isn't it a *scream*?

HORACE

We oughta—make it more unpleasant for some of those jays. Gives the school a bad name.

FUSSIE

But, listen, Horace, honest—you'll just *die*. He said he was going to get the book this afternoon. Now you know what he *looks* like, but he turns to—

[Both girls are convulsed.]

DORIS

It'll get him all fussed up! And for nothing at all!

HORACE

Too bad that class of people come here. I think I'll go to Harvard next year. Haven't broken it to my parental—but I've about made up my mind.

DORIS

Don't you think Morton's a good school, Horace?

HORACE

Morton's all right. Fine for the—*[kindly]* people who would naturally come here. But one gets an acquaintance at Harvard. Where'd'y' want these passionate lines?

[FUSSIE and DORIS are off again convulsed.]

HORACE

[*Eye falling on the page where he opens the book.*] Say, old Bones could spill the English—what? Listen to this flyer: "For when we say that culture is to know the best that has been thought and said in the world, we simply imply that for culture a system directly tending to that end is necessary in our reading." [*He reads it with mock solemnity, delighting FUSSIE and DORIS.*] "The best that has been thought and said in the world!"

[MADELINE MORTON comes in from right; she carries a tennis racket.

MADELINE

[*Both critical and good-humored.*] You haven't made a large contribution to that, have you, Horace?

HORACE

Madeline, you don't want to let this sarcastic habit grow on you.

MADELINE

Thanks for the tip.

FUSSIE

Oh—Madeline. [*Holds out her hand to take the book from HORACE and show it to MADELINE.*] You know—

DORIS

S—h. Don't be silly. [*To cover this*] Who you playing with?

HORACE

Want me to play with you, Madeline?

MADELINE

[*Genially.*] I'd rather play with you than talk to you.

HORACE

Same here.

FUSSIE

Aren't cousins affectionate?

MADELINE

[*Moving through to the other part of the library.*] But first I'm looking for a book.

HORACE

Well, I can tell you without your looking it up, he did say it. But that was an age of different values. Anyway, the fact that they're quoting it shows it's being misapplied.

MADELINE

[*Smiling.*] Father said so.

HORACE

[*On his dignity.*] Oh, of course—if you don't want to be serious.

[*MADELINE laughs and passes on through.*]

DORIS

What are you two talking about?

HORACE

Madeline happened to overhear a little discussion down on the campus.

FUSSIE

Listen. You know something? Sometimes I think Madeline Morton is a highbrow in disguise.

HORACE

Say, you don't want to start anything like that. Madeline's all right. She and I treat each other rough—but that's being in the family.

FUSSIE

Well, I'll *tell* you something. I heard Professor Holden say Madeline Morton had a great deal more mind than she'd let herself know.

HORACE

Oh, well—Holden, he's erratic. Look at how popular Madeline is.

DORIS

I should *say*. What's the matter with you, Fussie?

FUSSIE

Oh, I didn't mean it really *hurt* her.

HORACE

Guess it don't hurt her much at a dance. Say, what's this new jazz they were springing last night?

DORIS

I know! Now look here, Horace—L'me show you.
[*She shows him a step.*]

HORACE

I get you.

[*He begins to dance with her; the book he holds slips to the floor. He kicks it under the table.*]

FUSSIE

Be careful. They'll be coming back here.

[Glances off left.]

DORIS

Keep an eye out, Fussie.

FUSSIE

[From her post.] They're coming! I tell you, they're coming!

DORIS

Horace, come on.

[He teasingly keeps hold of her, continuing the dance. At sound of voices, they run off, right. FUSSIE considers rescuing the book, decides she has not time.]

SENATOR

[At first speaking off.] Yes, it could be done. There is that surplus, and as long as Morton College is socially valuable—right here above the steel works, and making this feature of military training—*[He has picked up his hat.]* But your Americanism must be unimpeachable, Mr. Fejevary. This man Holden stands in the way.

FEJEVARY

I'm going to have a talk with Professor Holden this afternoon. If he remains he will—*[It is not easy for him to say]* give no trouble. *[MADELINE returns.]* Oh, here's Madeline—Silas Morton's granddaughter, Madeline Fejevary Morton. This is Senator Lewis, Madeline.

INHERITORS

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SENATOR

[*Holding out his hand.*] How do you do, Miss Morton. I suppose this is a great day for you.

MADELINE

Why—I don't know.

SENATOR

The fortieth anniversary of the founding of your grandfather's college? You must be very proud of your illustrious ancestor.

MADELINE

I get a bit bored with him.

SENATOR

Bored with him? My dear young lady!

MADELINE

I suppose because I've heard so many speeches about him—"The sainted pioneer"—"The grand old man of the prairies"—I'm sure I haven't any idea what he really was like.

FEJEVARY

I've tried to tell you, Madeline.

MADELINE

Yes.

SENATOR

I should think you would be proud to be the granddaughter of this man of vision.

MADELINE

[*Her smile flashing.*] Wouldn't you hate to be the granddaughter of a phrase?

FEJEVARY

[*Trying to laugh it off.*] Madeline! How absurd.

MADELINE

Well, I'm off for tennis.

[*Nods good-bye and passes on.*]

FEJEVARY

[*Calling to her.*] Oh, Madeline, if your Aunt Isabel is out there—will you tell her where we are?

MADELINE

[*Calling back.*] All right.

FEJEVARY

[*After a look at his companion.*] Queer girl, Madeline. Rather—moody.

SENATOR

[*Disapprovingly.*] Well—yes.

FEJEVARY

[*Again trying to laugh it off.*] She's been hearing a great many speeches about her grandfather.

SENATOR

She should be proud to hear them.

FEJEVARY

Of course she should. [*Looking in the direction MADELINE has gone.*] I want you to meet my wife, Senator Lewis.

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